

# Digital Communities

Transforming the way communities live, work and play





# Introduction & Objectives

*Government Technology* magazine was commissioned in November 2005 to conduct an online survey amongst its subscribers.

The objective of this survey was to help assess and better understand the priorities and challenges jurisdictions face when moving towards a digital community transformation. The survey also provided valuable insight into the short-range mobile technology procurement plans of *Government Technology* subscribers.

## Methodology

The objectives of this survey have been met through utilization of Internet survey techniques. The universe for this study was selected by a random interval, systemic sampling procedure to develop a representative cross selection of *Government Technology's* subscriber base. Subscribers received an email directing them to the online questionnaire at [www.govtech.net/surveys/dc1/](http://www.govtech.net/surveys/dc1/).

All aspects of this survey, including hosting, sorting, editing, tabulation, and report preparation was completed by *Government Technology* magazine.

Total number of emails sent	10,000
Completed surveys	314
Surveys tabulated for this report	100

# Executive Summary

## **Knowledge of Digital Communities**

Awareness is high. Over 74% of subscribers have heard of “Digital Communities.”

## **Understanding the opportunities of a Digital Community**

The concept is still gaining acceptance. A wide variety of the respondents could see some obvious opportunities, but have not had much time to think about them.

## **BARRIERS to moving forward with a wireless or mobile deployment as part of a Digital Community**

More information is needed for implementation. 47% of respondents are concerned about security of wireless technology, and 40% are unclear on return on investment (ROI) or how to document it to win budget approval.

## **Greatest public VALUE through an outdoor wireless network and mobile workforce in your locality**

Emergency response ranks first. Over 60% of respondents thought the greatest public value through outdoor wireless networks would be for police, fire and emergency response reporting. Public safety came in close behind at 46%. Public Internet access and police and fire information lookup closely followed public safety.

## **Essential to have in place before sending a mobile workforce into the field**

80% of respondents say that authenticating and protecting the data when users are syncing over public networks (data in motion) are essential elements. Protecting data on the device, including when a device is lost, stolen or misplaced followed closely behind at 77%.

## **Devices prefer using, or plan to purchase, for delivering solutions to mobile field workers**

Laptops are most preferred but many also use handhelds. While most mobile field workers are using laptops (72%), 54% are also using a wireless hand-held device. While using these devices, 46% prefer these devices to be ruggedized.

## **Justifying a wireless initiative in support of a mobile workforce**

Most respondents (42%) reported data communication as “very important” in justifying a wireless initiative. 30% said GIS/location-based services was “very important.” VoIP also ranked high.

## **How likely to be deploying a wireless infrastructure**

Only 12% have deployed services. 28% of respondents are evaluating the opportunities wireless has to offer. 26% are waiting for technologies to mature before making a decision.

## **Job Titles**

91% of respondents hold a management or supervisory title.



# Detailed Results

## Have you heard about Digital Communities

No knowledge	13%
Heard of it	74%
Evaluating its applicability to our community	5%
Currently involved in creating a Digital Community	8%

## Which of the following best describes your understanding of the opportunities of wireless and mobile technologies in creating Digital Communities?

Not on my radar	21%
Can see some obvious opportunities-not much time to think about it	49%
Keeping a clipping file — beginning to think about how they could change service delivery	13%
Convinced — actively involved in pursuing next steps in building a Digital Community	17%

## Which of the following best describes the BARRIERS to moving forward with a wireless or mobile deployment as part of a Digital Community initiative? (select all that apply)

Too busy to do anything new	30%
Do not know where to start or who to work with	21%
Unclear on return on investment (ROI) or how to document it to win budget approval	40%
Concerned about security on wireless technology	47%
Concerned about uncertain legal and/or policy environment	34%

## Which of the following are most likely to deliver the greatest public VALUE through an outdoor wireless network and mobile workforce in your locality? (select all that apply)

Social Services Mobile Case Management	28%
Land Management (licensing, permitting, inspections)	26%
Public Safety	46%
Police, Fire and Emergency Response Reporting	61%
Police, Fire Information Lookup	34%
Traffic Management and Control	24%
Parking Enforcement	10%
Video Surveillance	16%
Criminal Justice	18%
Port Security	6%
Tourism	15%
Public Internet Access	35%
Asset Management	12%
Automated Meter Reading (gas, water, parking and electric meters)	26%

**Which of the following are ESSENTIAL to have in place before sending a mobile workforce into the field with wireless connected laptops, tablets, PDAs, or smartphones? (select all that apply)**

Remotely managing and patching systems which are not connected or controlled by local network	39%
Authenticating and protecting the data when users are syncing over public networks (data in motion)	83%
Protecting the data on the device, including when a device is lost, stolen, misplaced, etc. (data at rest)	77%
Ensuring the devices are being used for company business	31%

**Which of the following devices are you using today, would you prefer to use or plan to purchase for delivering solutions to mobile field workers?**

**a. Car-Mounted Laptop**

Are using today	39%
Prefer to use	39%
Plan to purchase within 12 mths	22%

**b. Laptop**

Are using today	72%
Prefer to use	14%
Plan to purchase within 12 mths	14%

**c. Tablet PCs**

Are using today	30%
Prefer to use	41%
Plan to purchase within 12 mths	29%

**d. Wireless Hand-Held Device (Smartphones or PDAs)**

Are using today	54%
Prefer to use	29%
Plan to purchase within 12 mths	17%

**e. Ruggedized Devices**

Are using today	23%
Prefer to use	46%
Plan to purchase within 12 mths	31%

**On a scale of 1 to 5, how important are the following in justifying a wireless initiative in support of a mobile workforce?**

(1 being not important, 5 being most important)

**a. VoIP Services**

1	23%
2	13%
3	34%
4	20%
5	9%



**b. DATA Communication**

1	4%
2	4%
3	16%
4	34%
5	42%

**c. VIDEO/ Remote Monitoring**

1	15%
2	19%
3	31%
4	23%
5	12%

**d. GIS/LOCATION Based**

1	9%
2	6%
3	27%
4	28%
5	30%

**In thinking about getting started, which of the following best describes when your locality will likely be deploying a wireless infrastructure?**

We have no intention to use wireless as part of our local government strategy	11%
We are waiting for technologies to mature before making a decision	26%
We are currently evaluating the opportunities wireless has to offer	28%
We are intending to run pilots in the next 6-12 months	7%
We are already running a pilot	16%
We are already live and have deployed services	12%

**What is your job title?**

Adm/Policy Mgmt or Supv	13%
Consultant Mgmt or Supv	1%
Financial/Procurement Mgmt or Supv	4%
Info Sys/Technical Mgmt or Supv	33%
Law Enforcement	8%
Marketing/Sales Mgmt or Supv	9%
Operations/Project Mgmt or Supv	23%
Professional Mgmt or Supv	9%